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A Printing Press  
at St. Helena  
in 1806

*By Douglas C. McMurtrie*



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# A Printing Press at St. Helena in 1806

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TO the *British and Colonial Printer* of August 25th, 1932, I contributed some notes on "The First Printing at St. Helena," and later I reprinted them with some revisions. The recent republication of these notes in the *St. Helena Diocesan Magazine* has resulted in the courteous transmission to me by Mr. G. C. Kitching, of St. Helena, of further information, establishing the date of the introduction of the press on the island of St. Helena.

My former contribution was based upon the information available in the British Museum and the New York Public Library. But information from local sources, as always, proves most valuable.



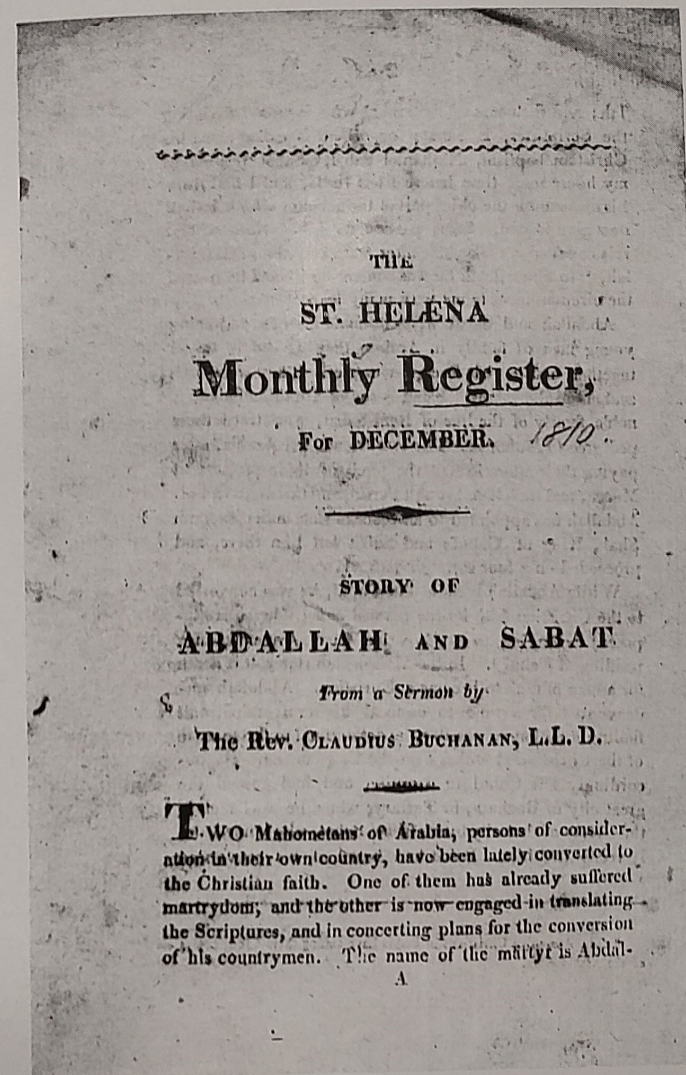
It is now apparent that the first printing press was brought to the island in 1806. In the Consultations of the Council of the Government Book 104, page 16, occur the following entries, transcribed for me by Mr. Kitching:—

8th September, 1806

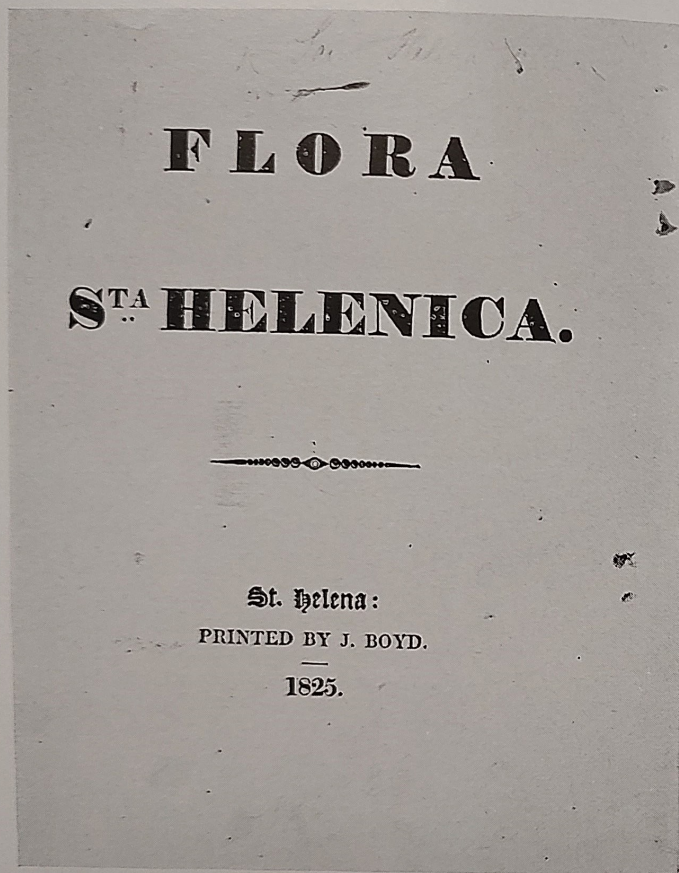
(1) Lieut. Colonel Cocks has much pleasuring in acquainting the Governor and Council, that a Printing Press, the joint property of himself, Captain Charles Hodson, Dr. Kay, and Lieut. Barnes, of which the latter has offered himself as the Conductor, and that the Proprietors authorize him to offer the Press in aid of the Hon'ble Company's Service. Should the Board deem it at any time useful.

(2) The Board approve much of the use of the Printing Press, from which the service and the Island will derive great benefit, by Promulgation of the Orders of the Hon'ble Company, and the Institutions of Government which frequently fail in effect from not being sufficiently known.—The same circumstance applies to the official Regulation of the Service, both in Civil and Military Departments, and at present when the want of Assistants in the different offices if of much inconvenience, the aid of the Printing Press will prove most material advantage to the service. — The offer is therefore accepted.

What was certainly the first newspaper printed in St. Helena is represented by a copy of the *St. Helena Gazette* of June 20th, 1807, which has been preserved. This was Volume 1, No. 5, "Printed for the Proprietors by Arthur Hill."







This issue consists of a letter to the Governor describing the loss of the East India Company's ship *Ganges*, together with one advertisement. This is the earliest printed document preserved in the Government archives.

With this note I take the opportunity of presenting reduced facsimiles of the title pages of two early issues of the St. Helena press, both reproduced from originals in the British Museum.